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ABSTRACT

Vermont's State Board of Education in 1990 set four primary goals for its educational system: produce well-rounded individuals and citizens, restructure schools to support very high performance for all students, develop the best teachers and administrators in the nation, and create partnerships to support education. Also, a common core of learning required of all students is being developed. In the area of assessment, fourth and eighth graders currently compile examples of their best writing and mathematics work as well as take a uniform test. Literacy of all adults is sought by the year 2000. A comprehensive school restructuring plan has been created to challenge all students and emphasize high performance. Meeting the needs of special education students and graduating students and adults from technical education programs who have the necessary academic and technical skills to enter the work force are also goals. Other goals include improving middle-grade education, establishing professional standards for educators, creating family-school-community partnerships, and supporting young children and families. School choice, governance, and finance are three other important subjects to be addressed. A month-by-month calendar of steps to reach Vermont's education goals is included. (JPT)

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A Green Mountain Challenge:

Very High Skills for Every Student: No Exceptions, No Excuses

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A Green Mountain Challenge:

Very High Skills for Every Student: No Exceptions, No Excuses

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Message from Douglas I. Tudhope, Chair of the State Board of Education

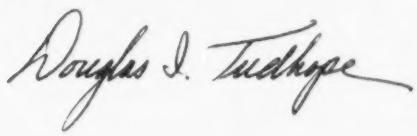
Welcome to the 1992-93 **Green Mountain Challenge**, our plan to educate all Vermont students to the highest standards.

This book is not about fine tuning. We must fundamentally restructure our education system if we are to see to it that every child becomes a competent, caring, productive, and responsible individual and citizen who is committed to lifelong learning.

The **Green Mountain Challenge** is the result of planning by the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and our many partners who are working to vastly improve education for all Vermont students. More than 200 of us gathered in Randolph, Vt. on June 1 and 2 to discuss our current situation in each of these important areas, what we envisioned for the future, and what steps it would take to get there.

Vermont's economic future is inextricably bound to the quality of its education programs. Hard times right now must not deter us from our quest for a superior education for every child. Success will require the hard work and commitment of many thousands of people — including teachers, board members, taxpayers, school administrators, parents, businesses, and other state agencies.

Please join us.



Message from Richard P. Mills, Commissioner of Education

One of the great stories in American education is being written now in Vermont schools. An immense partnership of teachers, principals, superintendents, boards, employers, parents, human services professionals, and other citizens is bent on very high skils for every student — no exceptions, no excuses. There is no more important work than what they do.

The **Green Mountain Challenge** of 1990-91 has been our map, but the intense effort of the last year has driven us beyond the edge of the map. So, many of those partners helped redraw it, and produced this new **Green Mountain Challenge**. The same goals are there, and so are the familiar strategies to reach them. But it contains new milestones that chart our course ahead.

Here is the heart of the matter: Tell students what we expect, and listen to them, too — most of them really want greater challenges than we offer them now. Measure results and talk sensibly about them — the truth is that we are not yet close to the results we are capable of. And strengthen the basic partnership of parent, student, teacher. There are a few more items on the agenda, but we are going to get those three right, and a lot of the rest will fall in place.

The work is hard and the times are difficult. But we are moving. And I wouldn't miss the chance to be in company with these partners for anything.

Vermont's Education Goals

Adopted by the State Board of Education, January 16, 1990

Goal 1: Vermonters will see to it that every child becomes a competent, caring, productive, and responsible individual and citizen who is committed to continued learning throughout life.

Goal 2: Vermonters will restructure their schools to support very high performance for all students.

Goal 3: Vermont will attract, support, and develop the most effective teachers and school leaders in the nation.

Goal 4: Vermont parents, educators, students, and other citizens will create powerful partnerships to support teaching and learning in every community.

Initiatives Connected to Goal 1

"Vermonters will see to it that every child becomes a competent, caring, productive, and responsible citizen who is committed to continued learning throughout life."

The Common Core of Learning

The Current Situation:

- More than 2,000 Vermonters helped identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all students must have in order to be successful.
- The first draft of "What All Learners Need to Know" was distributed to 2,000 people and presented at statewide summer institutes.
- A cross section of Vermont's best teachers reviewed and sharpened that draft based on responses we received.

But,

- We need to share the next draft statewide and receive responses from educators and others.
- We must decide how to measure performance. We must identify effective teaching methods to achieve that performance.
- Communities need to respond to "What All Learners Need to Know," and integrate the vital skills and knowledge into their curricula.

What We Envision:

- There is statewide consensus on what all students need to know and be able to do. All students are challenged and know what is expected of them.
- The vital knowledge and skills are supported by curriculum frameworks and assessment measures.
- The Common Core guides Vermont schools as they align their curricula to meet national and international standards.

Actions:

- December 1992: Distribute Draft 2 of "What All Learners Need to Know" to all schools; arrange discussion and response.
- April 1993: Vermont educators will identify teaching practices that result in students achieving the vital skills and knowledge.
- October 1993: The Vermont Institute of Science, Math & Technology, with the Department of Education, will complete a draft curriculum framework that reflects Vermont's Common Core.

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Assessment

The Current Situation:

Vermont 4th and 8th graders periodically review their writing and mathematics work for pieces demonstrating high accomplishments. This work goes into their portfolios. Their teachers use statewide criteria to assess each student's portfolio and student-selected "best pieces." Each 4th and 8th grade student also responds to a uniform test, which is assessed by outside evaluators. The assessment program has been in place for one year. We are addressing these problems:

- Reliable assessments and instructional change are the dual goals we are trying to achieve. The program requires significant time from 4th and 8th grade teachers.
- Substantial, ongoing professional development is required to enable teachers to score reliably, consistently applying program standards.
- Students' abilities reflect all the education and experience they have had up to the time when the assessment is reported, but some 4th and 8th grade teachers fear that assessment results will be used unfairly to focus only on their teaching.

What We Envision:

- All teachers, including special education and Chapter One teachers, continually involve students in self-assessment, and encourage them to manage their own portfolios. Giving students experience with the portfolio criteria helps them meet the standards.
- Professional development and time are available for these activities.
- Statewide results are reported at 4th and 8th grade and by 1994 will be reported in high school.
- Because of teacher involvement at all grades, student performance at the assessed years, grades 4 and 8, steadily improves.
- Assessments have high inter-rater agreement.
- Schools seek continuous improvement by using assessment results to strengthen their programs.

Actions:

- November 1992: Begin professional development for 4th and 8th grade teachers and for high school pilot teachers to ensure consistent application of assessment criteria.

- January 1993: Establish a three-year plan to increase student performance and inter-rater agreement.
- August 1993: Complete Summer Institutes on instruction and assessment in mathematics and writing.
- September 1993: Expand the program to high school. Pilot arts assessment. Begin design of science, social studies, and reading assessments, including study of multi-disciplinary portfolios.
- October 1993: Evaluate data from previous two years' assessments to determine viability of professional development networks and institutes, and determine improvements necessary for the assessment itself.
- July 1994: Conduct Summer Institutes in all academic subjects for which assessment is ongoing or planned.
- September 1994: Decide whether multi-disciplinary portfolios or discipline-specific portfolios should be used in pilot assessments in science, social studies, and other subjects.

Full Literacy by the Year 2000

The Current Situation:

- Seventeen percent of those who enter 9th grade do not complete high school. By the year 2000, three of four jobs will require education or training beyond high school.
- Nationally, more than 50 percent of our work force has basic skill problems on the job and nearly 75 percent of the unemployed have inadequate basic skills. In Vermont, literacy programs reach less than 10 percent of those who need them.
- The Vermont Literacy Board is committed to reaching full literacy by the year 2000, is poised for action, and has full support from a field of dedicated and skilled teachers and tutors. Although fiscal resources are limited, strong partners stand ready to help carry out the Board's plan.

What We Envision:

- All adults (16 years and older) have the ability to read, write and compute for personal fulfillment and effective participation in society.
- Communities take responsibility for the education of all their citizens, and act with full support from local and state educational leaders who have helped to shape public policy toward this end.

Actions:

- January 1993: Publish the facts about illiteracy in Vermont.
- May 1993: Promote and organize the involvement of key education leaders in a statewide forum to review the facts about illiteracy in Vermont and plan action.

Initiatives Connected to Goal 2

"Vermonters will restructure their schools to support very high performance for all students."

Restructuring Schools for High Performance

The Current Situation:

- The Department of Education helped create a comprehensive vision for school change. Although we and our partners started and now support the restructuring process, there is not yet a systemic plan for change in all schools and communities.
- In the past two years, 14 schools received challenge grants and other resources through the Reinventing Vermont Schools initiative. Many schools are also fully integrating students with special needs into classrooms as a result of Act 230 and local district initiatives. What we've learned from these and other changing schools provides a framework for school transformation.
- Vermont won grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) that will significantly advance systemic change.
- We are finishing the current phase of public school approval, which allowed many communities to define and implement a school improvement process. Planning for the next phase has begun.

What We Envision:

- All students are challenged and know what is expected of them.
- All schools are restructuring for high performance, and they have the support they need. Change takes a systemic approach, addressing curriculum, assessment, organization and management, professional development, and community partnerships.
- Those involved use the collective knowledge and results from:
  - restructuring schools,
  - the public school approval process, and
  - strategies and resources from NSF, NASDC, and other sources.

Actions:

- November 1992: Sponsor quarterly seminars for restructuring schools to share information on effective practices and work jointly on strategies.

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- December 1992: Expand the School Restructuring Corps, a group of trained facilitators available to assist local schools and communities.
- January 1993: Identify 12 schools to participate in the second year of the New American Schools project.
- January 1993: Produce a videotape of what restructured schools look like.
- February 1993: Begin a public awareness campaign with the Public Agenda Foundation to increase public support for major change in school structure to boost performance.
- June 1993: Compile a package of the best restructuring planning information and tools available. This will include data on assessment and evaluation, innovative and successful practices and programs, funding sources, and school profiles.
- July 1993: Provide summer training to second-year participants in the New American Schools project.
- June 1994: Pilot the next phase of public school approval to facilitate local school restructuring.

Restructuring the Department of Education for High Performance

The Current Situation:

- We redesigned the Department of Education to accomplish its new mission of transforming education for high performance. We are now setting the new design in motion.

  Instead of four divisions, the Department is now made up of six home teams: Core Services, Financial Management, School Development and Information, Career and Lifelong Learning, Teaching and Learning, and Family and Educational Support.

- Department staff received Commitment to Quality training on interactive skills, problem solving, and quality improvement. More training is still needed.

What We Envision:

- The Department's resources are carefully aimed at the problems that need the most attention.
- We have a consistent approach to solving problems.
- The Department's design is flexible and meets needs that arise.

Actions:

- November 1992: Create Department team plans to accomplish our new mission.
- January 1993: Distribute a guide to Department services that reflects the new structure and provides easy access for all customers.
- January 1993: Evaluate Commitment to Quality training and plan further training, support, and continual updates.
- August 1993: Report to the State Board of Education on the status of Department restructuring: accomplishments, adjustments, and work still to be done.

Meeting the Needs of All Students Through Special Education Reform

The Current Situation:

School restructuring efforts resulting from Act 230 and special education reform have produced significant changes:

- Schools have started Instructional Support Teams, are restructuring their programs, and have provided staff training to meet the needs of all students.
- The number of students receiving special education services declined by more than six percent for two consecutive years. Vermont now ranks first in the nation in the percentage of its special education students served in the regular classroom.

But,

- We know little about how these changes have affected students. Are these students doing as well as they would have if they were receiving special education?
- Special education regulations and paperwork are still a burden. A committee studying this area made recommendations to reduce paperwork and increase time educators can spend with students.
- School districts are concerned that if they continue to lose state and federal funds as their special education count falls, they will be unable to fund needed services.

What We Envision:

- Learning support services are available to every student and teacher who needs them. The vast majority of students succeed in the regular classroom.
- An equitable funding mechanism is in place.
- The number of students eligible for special education is significantly reduced.
- Special education paperwork is the minimum required by law to ensure the participation of parents and students, and is designed for maximum efficiency.
- We measure the success of this effort by its effect on student outcomes.

Actions:

- December 1992: Develop recommendations to strengthen Act 230.
- January 1993: Report on the effect of Act 230 and the reduction of special education child count on individual students and schools.
- February 1993: Test a new minimum set of special education reporting procedures at two schools using computer software.

High Skills or Low Wages? Vermont's Choice, Too!

The Current Situation:

- Vermont's work force needs the academic and technical skills necessary to function in high performance work places.
- Many students who enroll in technical education programs do not have the prerequisite academic skills, do not understand how to apply academic skills to hands-on tasks, and have not given sufficient thought to career decisions.
- Technical programs could be strengthened if they issued industry-recognized certificates that clearly identify student progress and work place preparation.
- Vermont's secondary technical education system still depends primarily on in-school programs. We rarely use the kinds of work-based learning found in other industrialized nations.

What We Envision:

- High school and technical program instructors collaborate in developing and implementing applied academics curricula.
- There are career exploration programs available for all K-12 students and adults. Students have career preparation plans that reflect their interests, aptitudes, and abilities.
- There are multiple pathways to employment. These include earning credentials based on industry-recognized performance standards, work-based learning, and agreements between secondary technical programs and post-secondary and apprenticeship programs.
- All students and adults who complete technical programs have a portfolio of the academic and technical skills they acquired. They receive support to identify career options and lifelong learning opportunities.

Actions:

- June 1993: Conduct training in integrating academic and technical education, and in applied academics curricula.
- June 1993: Help automotive technology and building trades programs acquire industry certification, and develop at least two program certification areas.
- June 1993: Help develop at least two new work-based learning models.
- June 1993: Implement a system of student and program assessment that measures gains and achievement in academic, occupational, and work place skills.
- January 1994: Insure that all secondary technical education students have career plans.

Developing and Testing Career Choices: A School and Community Partnership

The Current Situation:

- More than 30 percent of Vermont's high school juniors and seniors are enrolled in general track courses, which do not prepare them for work or post-secondary education.
- Vermont is one of 22 states in the nation without a clear set of expectations for K-12 career education and planning.
- The variety and quality of options available to students to prepare them for pursuits beyond high school varies widely throughout the state.
- A limited number of schools and communities have begun to experiment with involving students in the community as part of their studies, providing them with opportunities to test career interests and apply academic learning to real-life situations.

What We Envision:

- Every school and region in Vermont maximizes school and community resources to enable students to pursue, experience, and test career choices.
- There is a statewide system of career education and career preparation — reflecting national career education guidelines — integrated throughout the K-12 curriculum.
- All Vermont students have career preparation plans in their portfolios.
- All students have the opportunity to apply academic learning to real-life situations.

Actions:

- June 1993: Conduct a statewide conference on career preparation with school leaders, the Department of Employment and Training, post-secondary institutions, business and industry partners, high school student representatives, and community members.
- June 1994: In partnership with four school systems, pilot four different approaches to K-12 career education.
- June 1994: Develop and make available to schools two models of involving students in the community as part of their studies.

Creating the Best Middle Grades Programs

Current Situation:

We are committed to creating programs that best meet the unique needs of students in grades 5 through 8. In 1990, we received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to promote systemic change in the middle grades.

- The Vermont Middle Grades Task Force created a middle grades mission statement and defined exemplary programs. We formed a Middle Grades Resource Team to develop outstanding programs.
- There are seven Middle Grades Lead Schools, and 43 other schools are members of the Network of Transforming Middle Level Schools.

But,

- Few programs fully incorporate the best middle grade teaching practices.
- Most middle grades teachers have not received special preparation to teach in middle grades. Few middle level college courses are available. There are no middle level teacher preparation programs in Vermont.

What We Envision:

- Curriculum and instruction are based on the unique needs of middle grade students, and emphasize problem solving and creative and critical thinking.
- Teams of teachers serving groups of students design middle grade programs. Teachers maintain close contact with each student. Teams use flexible scheduling and heterogenous student grouping. Governance is shared among the team. Teachers are prepare for and committed to working at the middle level.
- Schools, communities, social service agencies, and health care providers work together to promote student well being. Education, health care, and social services are coordinated at each school.

Actions:

- December 1992: Middle Grades Lead Schools create self-assessments and three-year plans.
- May 1993: Offer professional development to the Network of Transforming Middle Level Schools.
- September 1993: Offer middle level graduate course work for teachers in all regions of the state.

Initiatives Related to Goal 3

"Vermont will attract, support, and develop the most effective teachers and school leaders in the nation."

Professional Standards for Educators

The Current Situation:

- The State Board of Education established the Standards Board for Professional Educators in 1989.
- The Standards Board established Local and Regional Standards Boards to relicense educators. Educators now assume responsibility for their own professional growth.
- Responding to a challenge from the State Board of Education, the presidents of Vermont colleges and universities created a new way to approve teacher preparation programs. The new program approval process uses portfolios to assess program effectiveness.
- With the Standards Board, a group of educators established the Consortium for Professional Development. The Consortium will expand access to high-quality professional development opportunities.
- There has been tremendous growth in professional development opportunities in Vermont.

What We Envision:

- The explosive growth in the demand for professional training continues.
- A coordinated program of educator preparation and professional development is in place.
- Local and Regional Standards Boards assess and coordinate educator professional development.
- The professional development system is a partnership that includes the Standards Board, the Consortium for Professional Development, the Department of Education, higher education, business, families, and human services.
- Common standards for high-quality professional development are coordinated statewide.

Actions:

- May 1993: Use the new program approval process to approve two Vermont teacher preparation programs.
- June 1993: Provide assistance in the continued operation of local and regional standards boards.
- September 1994: Revise licensing structure to reflect current research on best practices and authentic educator assessment.

Initiatives Related to Goal 4

"Vermont parents, educators, students, and other citizens will create powerful partnerships to support teaching and learning in every community."

Family-School-Community Partnerships: Supporting Success for All Learners

The Current Situation:

Students need support to become competent, caring, and productive individuals and citizens. No one can do it alone. Families, schools, employers, law enforcement organizations, youth and community groups, and others recognize the changing needs of students and have become more active in providing support.

- Over 30 teams from around Vermont gathered last November at a Family-School-Community Collaboration Conference to plan stronger links between home and school.
- In the past three years the number of Vermont Parent-Teacher Associations has grown from seven to 48. The ParentLink phone system has grown from 10 to 24 schools.
- There is a keen need for partnerships in every community. In 1991, a Family-School-Community Partnerships Working Group created a "menu" of high-impact activities to support student success.
- Many chambers of commerce and other business groups are forming school partnerships.
- However, support through partnerships is still not widely available. Where there is support, it often depends on a few people.

What We Envision:

- Families are valued for their central role in the education of their children.
- The diversity of families is respected. Support is available for those who need it.
- Powerful webs of support are available for all students. Communities see the success of all students as a vital concern. Students thrive on common expectations and support.
- At least annually, communities assess partnership efforts and plan additional strategies.

Actions:

- January 1993: With the Vermont Superintendents Association, study instances of particularly effective community support.
- January 1993: Establish recognition programs for model partnerships.
- June 1993: Through conferences, mentoring, and recognition programs, encourage at least 10 schools and communities to develop annual action plans to increase school-family-community partnerships.
- September 1993: Provide partnership skills training for administrators, school board members, parents, teachers, and others (in response to their surveyed needs).

Education and Human Services: Working Together to Better Serve Children and Families

The Current Situation:

- A strong commitment to collaboration between the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services is producing powerful partnerships to support teaching and learning in every community.

  Nevertheless, more than one-quarter of Vermont students still arrive at school unready to learn.

- Over a dozen new programs designed to expand services and increase collaboration between education and human services have been launched around the state.

  Human services and education have joined to ensure that Vermont receives the maximum possible benefit from Medicaid for the provision of medically related services to children.

- Residential placements have been reduced from 206 to 167 as a result of combined state and local efforts.

- The Prevention Institute and the State Prevention Plan provide direction to enhance the health and well-being of Vermonters by addressing economic, social, and personal needs.

What We Envision:

- All children in Vermont succeed in their own communities. All students come to school ready to learn every day, and all schools are ready to meet the learning needs of all students.

- Partnerships among educators, human service providers, families, and communities support the primary role of the family in children's lives.

- A coordinated system of human services is available to children and families in every community. The school is an integral part of that system.

Actions:

- January 1993: Report results of programs serving students with severe emotional disturbances who have intensive needs.
- January 1993: Begin redesigning funding systems to maximize education and human service partnerships for the purpose of funding a full continuum of services:

  October 1992: Initiate joint budget planning process between the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

  January 1993: Pilot using Medicaid in two schools and two residential programs

  January 1993: Propose new legislation on funding state wards.
- June 1993: Begin training to increase the skills of those involved in family support efforts. The training will ensure informed workers and families and build family self-reliance.
- June 1993: Summarize the results of a youth risk behavior survey to measure future progress of the Vermont Health Objectives for the Year 2000.
- June 1993: Develop six new collaborative programs between education and human services.

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families

The Current Situation:

We have made a commitment to young children and families through these efforts:

- All three- to five-year-old children with disabilities receive early childhood special education services.
- Early Education Initiative Programs provide services to children birth through five years who are at risk of school failure.
- There are interagency agreements among the Department of Education, Head Start, and the Department of Health.
- The Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services developed a long-range plan to improve child care and early education services from birth to six. Together, we are also the co-lead agencies for the Family, Infant and Toddler Project of Vermont (Part H).
- Eight communities are planning comprehensive early childhood services systems through the Success by Six initiative.
- In three regions, we helped start Reading Recovery Programs, an individualized approach for first graders at risk of reading failure.
- We promote parent-professional partnerships in early childhood education.

But,

- Funding for early childhood services is inadequate. Not all early education services are available statewide, and quality of services is inconsistent.
- As a result of evolving early childhood practices, teachers, administrators, child care providers, and parents need training.

What We Envision:

- Schools are ready for all children upon their arrival.
- Because of partnerships with Human Services, access to high quality, community-based early childhood services is assured for all children and their families.
- Early childhood programs work with both children and their families, and use practices that meet the individual needs of each child.

- Highly skilled early childhood professionals work with Vermont's young children, and parents are equal partners in the education of their children.
- Communities receive needed training and assistance to help develop comprehensive, community-based early childhood and family development services.

Actions:

We will work with the Agency of Human Services, parents, schools, and community early childhood service providers to create a coordinated system of early education, child care services, and child development and family support services.

Our role is to:

- December 1992: Establish early intervention planning teams in 12 regions of the state under the Family, Infant and Toddler Project of Vermont.
- July 1993: Propose an equitable funding system for early childhood special education services and Early Education Initiative Programs statewide.
- January 1995: Implement the plan developed by the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services to:
  - Integrate early childhood resources,
  - Coordinate statewide and local early childhood training, and
  - Create a system of early childhood services that has common, high-quality standards.
- September 1995: Increase the number of Reading Recovery training sites to five so that this program is available in all regions of the state.

Closing Message:

Three Other Issues That Will Affect Our Work

The resolution of three important issues — choice, governance, and finance — will affect our work in years to come.

These three are linked. We cannot pick a finance solution without making assumptions about the governance we want. Talk about choice quickly runs aground on finance questions. And governance discussions have a way of provoking questions on choice.

It's no longer reasonable to isolate these discussions. Vermont is too small for such compartmental thinking, and we are too aware of how the parts affect the whole.

Here's what is at stake:

School Choice:

Around the nation, the question of choice has long been encumbered with political ideology — and hasn't been helped by the many true believers who view it as the only solution to education's issues. Yet it will not go away. Should choice be available to all? If it were, would quality improve? Could we maintain the broad public commitment to high-quality schools if parents had the primary responsibility for choosing quality? Let's find the *Vermont* answers.

We need a full airing of the issues around school choice — a lively, broad-ranging and informed discussion of the pros and cons. The Vermont Business Roundtable published a report on school choice that is a fine platform from which to debate this issue.

School Governance:

Vermont has many local boards, and many very small schools. There can be few economies of scale. Top-down solutions to this problem historically fail here. Fortunately for Vermont, local education policy leaders are asking hard questions and sketching visionary, yet practical, solutions.

How do we want to govern our schools? What must we control locally and what can we share regionally? Is it critical that we get the most for our money? Are there too many boards? Are there not enough? Who controls budgets in supervisory unions?

School Finance:

State aid to education has been underfunded for two years in a row, and the immediate future looks no better. Under the current formula, where you live determines how much you can spend on education. Total expenditures for public education have doubled in seven years. However, the state share has fallen to 27 percent of the total. Nationally, the average state share is around 50 percent. As state share has declined, local share has increased to make up the difference.

Two commissions are working on this issue this year. But right now the wealth of the whole state is not behind the education of every child. How should we raise the money to support education? How should we distribute it to promote equity and high performance? How can we build the case for this significant new investment in the future?

Vermont will have to write its own guidebooks.

Month-by-Month Calendar

October 1992

Education and Human Services: Working Together to Better Serve Children and Families: Initiate joint budget planning process between the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

November 1992

Assessment: Begin professional development for 4th and 8th grade teachers and for high school pilot teachers to ensure consistent application of assessment criteria.

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Sponsor quarterly seminars for restructuring schools to share information on effective practices and work jointly on strategies.

December 1992

Common Core of Learning: Distribute Draft 2 of "What Learners Need to Know" to all schools; arrange discussion and response.

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Expand the School Restructuring Corps, a group of trained facilitators available to assist local schools and communities.

Restructuring the Department of Education: Create Department team plans to meet our new mission.

Meeting the Needs of All Students Through Special Education Reform: Develop recommendations to strengthen Act 230.

Creating the Best Programs for Middle Grades Students: Middle Grades Lead Schools create self-assessments and three-year plans.

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families: Work collaboratively to establish early intervention planning teams in 12 regions of the state under the Family, Infant and Toddler Project of Vermont.

January 1993

Assessment: Establish a three-year plan to increase student performance and inter-rater agreement.

Full Literacy by the Year 2000: Publish the facts about illiteracy in Vermont.

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Identify 12 schools to participate in the second year of the New American Schools project.

Produce a videotape of what restructured schools look like.

Restructuring the Department of Education: Distribute a guide to Department services that reflects the new structure and provides easy access for all customers.

Evaluate Commitment to Quality training and plan further training, support and continual updates.

Meeting the Needs of All Students Through Special Education Reform: Report on the effect of Act 230 and the reduction of special education child count on individual students and schools.

Family-School-Community Partnerships: Supporting Success for All Learners: With the Vermont Superintendents Association, study instances of particularly effective community support.

Establish recognition programs for model partnerships.

Education and Human Services: Working Together to Better Serve Children and Families: Report results of programs serving students with severe emotional disturbances who have intensive needs.

Begin redesigning funding systems to maximize education and human service partnerships for the purpose of funding a full continuum of services.

Pilot the use of Medicaid in two schools and two residential programs.

Propose new legislation on funding state wards.

February 1993

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Begin a public awareness campaign with the Public Agenda Foundation to increase public support for major change in school structure to boost performance.

Meeting the Needs of All Students Through Special Education Reform: Test a new minimum set of special education reporting procedures at two schools using computer software.

April 1993

Common Core of Learning: Vermont educators will identify teaching practices that result in students achieving the vital skills and knowledge.

May 1993

Full Literacy by the Year 2000: Promote and organize the involvement of key education leaders in a statewide forum to review the facts about illiteracy in Vermont and plan action.

Creating the Best Programs for Middle Grades Students: Offer professional development to the Network of Transforming Middle Level Schools.

Professional Standards for Educators: Use the new program approval process to approve two Vermont teacher preparation programs.

June 1993

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Compile a package of the best restructuring planning information and tools available. This will include data on assessment and evaluation, innovative and successful practices and programs, funding sources, and school profiles.

High Skills or Low Wages? Vermont's Choice, Too! Conduct training in integrating academic and technical education, and in applied academics curricula.

Help automotive technology and building trades programs acquire industry certification, and develop at least two program certification areas.

Help develop at least two new work-based learning models.

Implement a system of student and program assessment that measures gains and achievement in academic, occupational, and work place skills.

Developing and Testing Career Choices: A School Community Partnership: Conduct a statewide conference on career preparation with school leaders, the Department of Employment and Training, post-secondary institutions, business and industry partners, high school student representatives, and community members.

Professional Standards for Educators: Provide assistance in the continued operation of local and regional standards boards.

Family-School-Community Partnerships: Supporting Success for All Learners: Through conferences, mentoring, and recognition programs, encourage at least 10 schools and communities to develop annual action plans to increase school-family-community partnerships.

Education and Human Services: Working Together to Better Serve Children and Families: Summarize the results of a youth risk behavior survey to measure future progress of the Vermont Health Objectives for the Year 2000.

Develop six new collaborative programs between education and human services.

Begin training to increase the skills of those involved in family support efforts. The training will ensure informed workers and families and build family self-reliance.

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families: Work collaboratively to propose an equitable funding system for early childhood special education services and Early Education Initiative Programs statewide.

July 1993

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Provide summer training to second-year participants in the New American Schools project.

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families: Propose an equitable funding system for early childhood special education services and Early Education Initiative Programs statewide.

August 1993

Assessment: Complete Summer Institutes on instruction and assessment in mathematics and writing.

Restructuring the Department of Education: Report to the State Board of Education on the status of Department restructuring: accomplishments, adjustments, and work still to be done.

Creating the Best Programs for Middle Grades Students: Offer middle level graduate course work for teachers in all regions of the state.

September 1993

Assessment: Expand the program to high school. Pilot arts assessment. Begin design of science, social studies, and reading assessments, including study of multi-disciplinary portfolios.

Creating the Best Programs for Middle Grades Students: Offer middle level graduate course work for teachers in all regions of the state.

Family-School-Community Partnerships: Supporting Success for All Learners: Provide partnership skills training for administrators, school board members, parents, teachers, and others (in response to their surveyed needs).

October 1993

Common Core of Learning: The Vermont Institute of Science, Math & Technology, with the Department of Education, will complete a draft curriculum framework that reflects Vermont's Common Core.

Assessment: Evaluate data from previous two years' assessments to determine viability of professional development networks and institutes, and determine improvements necessary for the assessment itself.

January 1994

High Skills or Low Wages? Vermont's Choice, Too! Insure that all secondary technical education students have career plans.

June 1994

Restructuring Schools for High Performance: Pilot the next phase of public school approval to facilitate local school restructuring.

Developing and Testing Career Choices: A School and Community Partnership: In partnership with four school systems, pilot four different approaches to K-12 career education.

Develop and make available to schools two models of involving students in the community as part of their studies.

July 1994

Assessment: Conduct Summer Institutes in all academic subjects for which assessment is ongoing or planned.

September 1994

Assessment: Decide whether multi-disciplinary portfolios or discipline-specific portfolios should be used in pilot assessments in science, social studies, and other subjects.

Professional Standards for Educators: Revise licensing structure to reflect current research on best practices and authentic educator assessment.

January 1995

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families: Work collaboratively to implement the plan developed by the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services to:
- Integrate early childhood resources,
- Coordinate statewide and local early childhood training, and
- Create a system of early childhood services that has common, high-quality standards.

September 1995

Caring Communities: Meeting the Needs of Young Children and Their Families: Work in collaboration to increase the number of Reading Recovery training sites to five so that this program is available in all regions of the state.

How Does It All Fit Together?

We know we must change the way schools teach. But we must also make sure that change happens in a coordinated and focused way.

Every part of the effort to reach Vermont's education goals is a joint investment. We are working with many partners — at both the state and local levels — to assure that every child can achieve very high skills.

Let's look at Goal 1: "Vermonters will see to it that every child becomes a competent, caring, productive, and responsible individual and citizen." To meet Goal 1, it's essential that we create high-quality curriculum and instruction. This chart shows, in an abbreviated form, *some* of the connections or bridges between Goal 1 state and local responsibilities. Many of the elements that appear in the state column were initiated locally, and vice versa.

State Responsibility	Bridge	Local Responsibility
Identify essential knowledge, skills and attitudes for all students. (The Common Core of Learning: Report 1)	Develop curriculum frameworks in science, math and technology (NSF[1])	Develop and implement curriculum that is based on the Common Core.
Identify successful instructional practices. (Common Core of Learning: Report 2)	Assist local schools in science, math and technology curriculum development. (NSF)	Use highly effective instructional practices.
Identify Vermont schools with high quality curriculum/ instruction. (Common Core of Learning: Report 3)	Help schools use technology effectively as an instructional tool. (NAS[2])	Integrate assessment into curriculum.
	Assist Middle Schools in curriculum development. (Carnegie[3])	

That's obviously not all there is. There are four education goals, and thousands of people are working on many different fronts to achieve them. The heart of the matter is that we need world-class standards of performance — and we must work together to help Vermont's children reach those standards.

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[1]NSF — The Vermont Institute for Science, Mathematics & Technology, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

[2]NAS — New American Schools grant.

[3]Carnegie — The Carnegie Corporation grant to fund development of middle grades programs.

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